

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNION CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Tegucigalpa, D.C., Honduras, C.A.

(REVISION 2008)

PREAMBLE

Believing it to be the will of God that followers of Jesus Christ associate themselves in fellowship for mutual encouragement, public worship, and active Christian service, and as Christian residents in this community, representing many denominational traditions, do hereby declare our common heritage and purpose by establishing a local congregation under the following articles.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

This Church regards itself as a force for the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the advancement of the Kingdom of God, with Tegucigalpa and vicinity as the first field of its labors and concerns.

This Church recognizes the diversity of various denominational backgrounds unified by our common faith in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, and believes its obligation is to serve the community by bringing mankind into communion with God, and actively demonstrating God's love to the poor and needy.

This Church believes in a program of religious education, the development of Christian character and leadership, the enlistment of all individuals as followers of Christ, and the promotion of fellowship and unity within the Body of Christ.

ARTICLE I: NAME AND CORPORATE OFFICE

The official name of this organization shall be in Spanish La Iglesia de Union Cristiana, and in English The Union Christian Church (hereafter referred to also as Union Church). The organization is incorporated under the laws of the State of Pennsylvania, U.S.A. It also has legal status and is duly registered in Honduras in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Honduras.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The purpose of the Union Church shall be to glorify God; to emphasize and exalt in the lives of its members the things of the Holy Spirit; to provide a means of witness to their loyalty to Christ; to engage its members in public and private worship, Christian education and service; to invite and encourage others to make Christian profession; and to maintain fellowship with all other bodies of Christians, especially the home churches of its members and the other Protestant churches in Tegucigalpa and Honduras.

ARTICLE III: COVENANT

Recognizing full liberty of individual interpretation, and cognizant of the various statements of faith under which its members may have made their professions of faith, the Union Church agrees upon the following points as indicative of the basic convictions of its membership:

We believe that God exists in three persons while remaining one in essence: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who are eternally and equally self-existent, self-revealed, and one in purpose. Jesus Christ, who is God manifested in the flesh, is the second person of the Godhead, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

We believe the Bible is the inspired word of God, a revelation from God to man, the infallible and final authority for our faith and conduct, and is superior to conscience and reason, but not contrary to reason.

We believe in the Sacraments of Baptism in water and Holy Communion, in the Church as Christ's Body of Believers, and in Life Everlasting.

We believe the Scriptures declare that Jesus Christ is coming again to gather all His saints unto Himself.

We believe that man was created good and upright, but man, by voluntary transgression fell from God's favor, and his only hope of redemption is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Salvation is by faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone, and not by any human works. The inward evidence to the believer of this salvation is the direct witness of the Holy Spirit.

We believe the Church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Each true believer, born of the Spirit, is an integral part of the general assembly and Church of the first born, which are written in heaven. Every believer should be involved in and supportive of the local church.

We believe the Church has been commissioned to take the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ to every tongue, tribe, people and nation.

Upon this foundation of our faith, we covenant with one another and with God to live and labor together as true disciples of Christ.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

The purpose of church membership is to recognize publicly those individuals who, as professing Christians involved in and benefiting from the fellowship and ministry of the Union Church, are willing to affirm their commitment to it.

Individuals desiring to become members of the Union Church shall acknowledge Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour as the primary prerequisite for membership. Membership in the Union Church is open to those at least 18 years of age. Since church membership brings with it both

certain privileges and responsibilities, each church member is expected to participate in and contribute to the fellowship and ministry of the church by:

1. Being in agreement with the purposes of the church;
2. Promoting the welfare of the church;
3. Regularly attending its services;
4. Regularly contributing towards its support;
5. Personally participating in its activities;
6. Living a godly life; and
7. Taking part in the confirmation of Elders, in congregational meetings, and in other matters of church business relevant to the members of the church.

Membership in another church outside Honduras shall not be a hindrance to membership in the Union Christian Church. A Union Church member may therefore maintain dual church membership.

Interest in membership shall be communicated to an Elder of the Union Church. Prospective members will be interviewed by one or more Elders to determine if they meet the requirements for membership, and a recommendation made to the Board of Elders to confirm membership. Those individuals who are willing to affirm their commitment to the Union church, and who have been confirmed by the Board of Elders will be recognized publicly through means determined by the Board.

Membership in Union Church may be terminated by the Board of Elders based upon:

1. The written or verbal request of the member.
2. The result of inactive membership
3. The result of church discipline.

A Union Church member permanently relocating out of Honduras shall be automatically placed upon an inactive membership list, and after one year shall be removed from the membership altogether. If the member returns to Honduras, he/she may be restored to active membership through an interview with one or more Elders of the church, and with their recommendation.

In addition, the Board of Elders will regularly review the membership list and place upon the inactive membership list those members who have not regularly attended worship services (at least twice every three months), participated in church activities, or otherwise fulfilled the above mentioned responsibilities of church membership.

ARTICLE V: CHURCH DISCIPLINE

1. Formative Discipline:

- I) Every disciple (follower) of Christ must be under His discipline (His instruction and correction) which is administered to each one through the Church (1Cor.12:12-27; 1Th.5:12-15; Heb.3:12, 13; 10:24, 25). Mutual submission to one another (Eph.5:21) and to the Elder(s) whom the Lord has set over His Church (Heb.13:17; 1Pt.5:5) will result in the sanctification of each Member individually and of the whole body of the

Church collectively. There are occasions, however, when one's failure to respond to this formative discipline makes the application of corrective discipline necessary.

2. Corrective Discipline:

I) Corrective discipline becomes necessary when heretical doctrine or disorderly, immoral, or scandalous conduct appears among the Members of the Church. As a general rule and whenever feasible, an effort must be made to resolve difficulty, correct error, and remove offence through counsel and admonition before more drastic steps are taken (Gal.6:1; Jas.5:19-20). The principles given to us in Mt.18:15-16; Rom.16:17-20; 1Cor.5:1-13; 2Th.3:6-15; 1Tim.5:19-20, and Tit.3:10 must be carefully followed and applied to each and every case of corrective discipline as appropriate. In some cases, public admonition and/or public repentance may be warranted (Mt.18:17; 1Tim.5:20). In the most extreme cases, removal from the membership of the Church may be necessary (Mt.18:17; 1Tim.1:20; Tit.3:10). All the Members of the Church are obliged to submit to and enforce as appropriate the decision of the Church in acts of corrective discipline.

II) The goals of corrective discipline are always the glory of God, the welfare and purity of the Church (1Cor.5:6), and the restoration and spiritual growth of the offender (1Cor.5:5; 2Cor.2:5-8; 1Tim.5:20).

3. Removal:

I) The act of removal from membership is the last resort of the Church in bringing a Member to repentance when corrective discipline has failed. Removal of a Member when corrective discipline has failed must be executed by the gathered Church (Mt.18:17; 1Cor.5:4), called by the Elder(s), at a stated meeting announced on three consecutive Sundays. To be valid, an act of removal must have the approval of the Members by a vote of 66% of the members present and voting.

4. Restoration:

I) Since one purpose of Church discipline is to restore a fallen brother or sister; it is the duty of the Church to forgive and to restore to full membership a Member who gives satisfactory evidence of his repentance (2Cor.2:6-8). This shall be done by the gathered Church, called by the Elder(s), and announced for at least three consecutive Sundays; by a vote of 66% of the members present and voting.

ARTICLE VI: OFFICERS

The officers of the Union Church shall consist of the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders of Union Christian Church shall provide the spiritual, temporal, and legal governance, guidance, and oversight of the church. For this function they are responsible to God (Hebrews 13:17).

The Board of Elders

As there were in Old Testament times elders of the people for the government, so in the New Testament Church, Christ has furnished others besides the Ministers of the Word with gifts for ministry and for governing. These Scriptures loosely use the term Elders: Acts 14:23; 15:2; 20:17; Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:1-14; 5:17-18; Titus 1:5-9; James 5:14; I Peter 5:1.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Elders to seek the leading of the Holy Spirit as they develop strategies for and implement the ministries of the Union Church. It is within their jurisdiction to create and establish guidelines for the functioning of a Deacon Board and a Trustee Board; receive members into the church; present an annual expense budget to the

membership for approval; approve actions affecting church properties; call congregational meetings when necessary; establish and supervise Sunday Schools and Bible classes; establish and supervise the guidelines and functioning of all special groups in the church- such as (but not restricted to) Men's Fellowship, Women's Fellowship, Youth Groups, and the Missions Committee; exercise authority over the time and place of the preaching of the Word and administration of the sacraments and over all other religious services; assemble the people for worship; determine the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the church members; appoint committees as required; and perform functions within the scope of this constitution and the Scriptures as deemed necessary for the ministry of the Union Church.

The Board of Elders will consist of no less than three men duly selected from the Union Church membership in addition to the Pastor. The selection of the Elders will be undertaken according to the following process.

Union Christian Church will only consist of an all-male Eldership (1Tim.2:12-13). Names of male candidates for the Board of Elders will be selected from the Union Church membership by the Elder's Board. Candidates will then be interviewed with their wives (if married) by the Board of Elders or representatives thereof to determine with each candidate if they meet the requirements set forth in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1 for this office. Those candidates who meet these qualifications and are willing and able to serve will be presented to the church membership for confirmation. Confirmation will consist of the approval of 75% of the members present and voting at any duly called congregational meeting where the candidates are presented.

The active term of office for an Elder is indefinite. However, at the end of every two-year period from when an Elder is originally confirmed onto the Board of Elders he will be subject to a review by the Board of Elders and confirmation by the church membership as stipulated above. This review may result in an invitation to return to the Elder's Board by the Elders. And then the confirmation of this Elder should take place at the next congregational meeting held for that purpose, but the time for this confirmation must occur before the end of that Elder's third year.

An Elder may resign their office at any time, or request a period of sabbatical (to be deemed an in-active Elder), for what would hoped to be a God-honoring reason(s).

Each Elder is accountable to God, his fellow Elders and the congregation for his ministry. In consultation with the Board of elders each Elder shall evaluate annually his personal ministry as an Elder. The Board of Elders shall determine standards for that evaluation. If an Elder is found not meeting the Biblical qualifications for or not fulfilling the responsibilities of the office, he may be asked by the Board of Elders to resign. If he will not resign the Board of Elders may effect his dismissal from the office by a 75% vote of the other members of the Board. An Elder may not participate in the final discussions or vote of the Board concerning his reappointment to or dismissal from the Board of Elders.

The Board of Elders will elect from its members annually a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary. The Board will also elect a Treasurer within itself or from among the church membership.

The Chairman will preside at all meetings of the Board of Elders and congregational meeting. In his absence the Vice-Chairman will act as Chairman.

The Secretary will keep complete and permanent records of the discussions and transactions that take place at Board of Elders meetings, any other meetings agreed upon by the Church Board, and congregational meeting. Along with the Pastor he will keep complete records of Church activities including memberships, baptisms, marriages, burials, and any others considered necessary by the Board. In his absence these duties will be performed by the Vice-Chairman.

The Treasurer will keep complete and permanent records of the fiscal transactions of the Church. He/She will be responsible for preparing and presenting the annual expense budget established by the Board of Elders for congregational approval. He/She will be responsible for the collection, accounting, and deposit of church receipts as well as the disbursement of church funds authorized by the Board. He/She will prepare monthly financial reports, as asked, to be presented to the Board of Elders. In his/her absence these duties will be performed by another appointed by the Board.

The Pastor

The Pastor is the spiritual leader of the Board of Elders and the congregation. He shall be responsible for preaching, officiating at all sacraments, rites, and ordinances, praying with the sick and afflicted, and performing any other functions in keeping with the spiritual enrichment of the congregation, and the job description prepared by the Board of Elders. While the Pastor as an Elder is a full voting member of the Board of Elders (a 'chief' among equals), he is subject to the Board of Elders in the performance of his responsibilities. The Pastor may not serve as an officer of the Board of Elders, or be designated as a signatory on church bank accounts.

When a vacancy occurs in the position of Pastor, the Board of Elders will undertake a selection process to identify candidates for the position. Once a candidate has been identified, he will be presented to the church membership for confirmation. The Pastor must be confirmed by 75% of the church members present and voting at the congregational meeting held for the purpose of confirming his selection. In the same manner, the Pastor may be removed if he is not reconfirmed by 75% of the church members present and voting at the congregational meeting held for the purpose of reconfirming his selection (the same as any other Elder above). The Pastor may also be removed by a 75% vote of the Board of Elders, duly confirmed by 75% of the church members present and voting at the congregational meeting held for the purpose of confirming his removal.

ARTICLE VII: FINANCES

The Union church fiscal year will begin on January 1 and end on December 31. The Board of Elders will prepare an annual expense budget to be presented for congregational review and approval at the annual congregational meeting to be held within two months following the end of the fiscal year. A report of Reserved Fund balances will also be made at this meeting.

Bank accounts will be in the name of the "Union Christian Church" as joint accounts for fund withdrawal by the Treasurer and any other Elder(s) as designated by the Board of Elders, with the exception of the Pastor.

ARTICLE VIII: MEETINGS

For the purposes of conducting Union Church business a quorum shall consist of 60% of the active church members physically present in Honduras at the time of the meeting. This definition will apply for congregational meetings, Board of Elders meetings, and the meetings of any other bodies created by the Board of Elders and delegated responsibility for Union Church functions.

All meetings will be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order, except as otherwise specified in this constitution. In addition, all items of church business will be considered approved when affirmed by 60% of the members present and voting at any meeting, except where otherwise specified in this constitution.

The Board of Elders will meet as often as deemed necessary, but must meet at least once each month.

The annual congregational meeting of the Union Church will be held within two months of the end of the fiscal year. The exact date of the meeting will be given to the church membership with two weeks prior written notice by the Board of Elders.

In the event a quorum of the church membership is not present at a congregational meeting, the Board of Elders may call a subsequent special meeting to take place no less than one week later. This special meeting, so called, will be empowered to conduct church business with those active members in attendance in the absence of a quorum. The minutes of these meetings must include a certification by the Board of Elders of the special circumstances requiring that church business be conducted in the absence of a quorum.

With the exception of the above, congregational meetings may be called by the Board of Elders by giving the membership at least two weeks advance notice and publishing the agenda for the meeting.

ARTICLE IX: CONSTITUTION

This constitution of the Union Christian Church can only be amended at a business meeting where a quorum of the church membership is present and 75% of the members present affirm its amendment.

A duly called congregational meeting, where quorum was met, was held on January 27th, 2008 at which time the church membership approved this amended constitution.